

*Turning Sour Apples into
Apple Pie*

Dealing with Difficult People

Workshop Outcomes

- Explain Characteristics of Difficult Behaviors
- Identify Strategies for Dealing with Difficult Characteristics
- Apply Strategies to Difficult Scenarios

Characteristics of Difficult Behaviors

- Seven Types of Difficult Behaviors
 - Sherman Tank
 - Exploder
 - Complainer
 - Clam
 - Wet Blanket
 - Know-It-All
 - Staller

The Sherman Tank

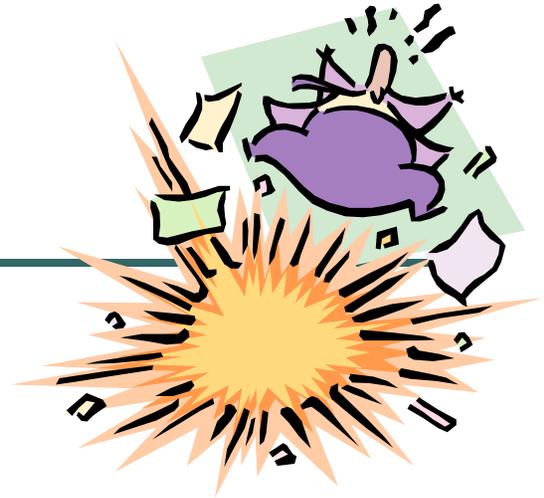
- Behaviors include:
 - Abusive, abrupt, intimidating, and contemptuous
 - Victims are defensive, overwhelmed and powerless
 - Driven to prove to others they are always right
 - Lack caring and respect for others
 - Achieve short-term objectives at the expense of others (lost friendships, lack of respect)



Strategies for Dealing with The Sherman Tank

- **Must stand up to them without getting into a fight**
 - Don't worry about being polite-just get your point across
 - Get their attention and maintain eye contact
 - State own opinion forcefully and without apology
 - Don't argue or put the other person down
 - Be ready to be friendly and open to negotiation

The Exploder



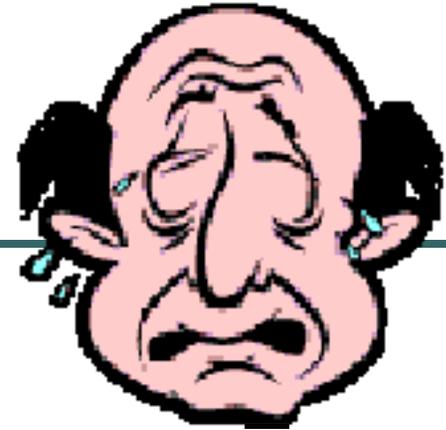
- Behaviors include:
 - Equivalent to a temper tantrum
 - Outbursts are barely in control
 - Sometimes throwing things, shouting, or even hitting can occur
 - React in this manner as they perceive themselves to be thwarted or threatened



Strategies for Dealing with The Exploder

- Must get them to wind down in order to discuss their problem
 - Give them time to get self-control on their own
 - If necessary, tell them to “stop” or “quiet down”
 - Use active listening skills as usually they just need to vent
 - Take to a private area to continue conversation

The Complainer



- Behaviors include:
 - Finds fault with everything
 - Message is someone should be doing something about their problems
 - Unable to engage in productive problem-solving dialogue
 - Feel powerless about the situations for which they complain
 - Manifestation of perfectionism to insulate them from sharing ownership of their problems



Strategies for Dealing with The Complainer

- Must interrupt their cycle of persistent blaming and insist on using problem-solving strategies
 - Listening attentively, even if bored or frustrated
 - Acknowledge by summarizing and paraphrasing
 - Don't agree or apologize
 - State the facts without commenting
 - Try to move to a problem-solving mode
 - Find facts and put in writing
 - If all else fails, ask the person how she wants this discussion to end.

The Clam



- Behaviors include:
 - Engages in conversations through silence, grunts, or a noncommittal “yes” or “no”
 - In attempts to get them to open up, they maintain stance and offer no clarification
 - The communication method is to avoid painful interpersonal communication, hostility, or stating an opinion
 - Used to mask fear, anger, or cooperation

Strategies for Dealing with The Clam

- Must get them to open up and discuss what is on their mind
 - Ask open-ended questions
 - Wait for a response
 - Do not fill the silence with idle chit-chat
 - If no response after a silent wait, ask another open-ended question
 - Use the friendly-silent-stare strategy

The Wet Blanket

- Behaviors include:
 - Quick, negative responses (it won't work)
 - Difficulties moving from "fault-finding" to "problem-solving"
 - Continually negative and critical
 - Feel everything is out of their control
 - Use this attitude to escape own feelings of powerlessness
 - They have a basic bitterness about themselves, others, and lives



Strategies for Dealing with The Wet Blanket

- Major task is to engage in rational problem-solving without getting drawn into the negativism and pessimism
 - Stay optimistic
 - Don't argue them out of pessimism
 - Don't offer solutions until thoroughly discussed
 - Be prepared to take action on your own and announce plans to do so

The Know-It-All



- Behaviors include:
 - Bulldozing expert on all matters
 - Absolute certainty that makes others feel unworthy or dumb
 - When questioned will dump a profusion of facts and arguments
 - Behavior occurs as a need to simplify the world (no gray areas)
 - Protects them from the inferiority of others



Strategies for Dealing with The Know-It-All

- Major task is to get the know-it-all to consider alternatives
 - Be prepared!
 - Listen and paraphrase points of contention
 - Don't overgeneralize
 - Be tentative in disagreements
 - Ask exploratory questions
 - May need to choose to give-in to maintain working relationship

The Staller



- Behaviors include:
 - Habitually indecisive
 - Difficulties following through
 - Usually agreeable and easy to work with until you need to depend on them
 - Dilemma occurs when doing making decisions so as not to disappoint others
 - Desire to not make someone mad or to disappoint is the main reason for the Staller's behavior



Strategies for Dealing with The Staller

- Major task is to attempt problem-solving without solving the problem yourself
 - Listen to the internal conflicts Staller have with making decisions
 - Listen for indirect clues to underlying issues
 - Surface the issues and apply problem-solving strategies
 - Concentrate on the facts
 - Give support to any decision the Staller makes

Any Questions?

- The Sherman Tank
- The Exploder
- The Complainer
- The Clam
- The Wet Blanket
- The Know-It-All
- The Staller

Applying the Information

- Case Study “Poor Peter”
- Small groups of 4-6 people
- Read the case study and respond to the questions
- 15 minutes to discuss
- Report out to the rest of the groups

Applying the Information

- Case Study “Angry Alice”
- Small groups of 4-6 people
- Read the case study and respond to the questions
- 15 minutes to discuss
- Report out to the rest of the groups

Large Group Discussion

- How might these people be feeling?
- How would you be feeling if faced with these conflicts?
- What responding skills would you choose to use in these situations?
- What barriers would prevent you from using these skills?

Any Questions?



- Characteristics of Difficult People?
- Strategies for Dealing with Difficult People?
- Applying the Strategies?
- Other Questions?

Workshop Evaluation

- Please complete evaluation prior to leaving

Thank You!

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